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Visualization of the Concept of «the North» in Fine Arts

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In the given article the authors consider an interpretation of the theme of the North in classical and modern works of art. Theoretical part of the work presents an attempt to generalize the existing principals and approaches to depiction of northern territories in fine art. The theme of the North in pictorial art is, on one hand, revealed as a unique territory, being far from the world globalization processes and, on the whole, far from people's presence and that is why it lets us perceive the laws of the macrocosm and the nature in their absolute purity. On the other hand, the North is the area of the native small-numbered peoples' habitation, and that is why such nations as the Nganasans, the Nenets, the Evenkis, the Eskimos, the Dolgans, and so on become the personages of works of art, which reveal the theme of the North. In the given article, we single out several approaches to a visual interpretation of the northern peoples' existence: documentary-ethnographical, philosophical and appeal to the theme of the Northern peoples in the context of social problematics. The applied part of the article is dedicated to the analysis of artworks, video-art, installations and artistic projects in the sphere of visual depiction of the North representation. The part of our art-historical research is dedicated to pieces of graphic work and paintings of the Krasnoyarsk Region artists, who have gone on expeditions to the North and have captured the life of the Northern peoples of the region – these are the works of D.I. Karatanov, A.P. Lekarenko, B.Y. Ryauzov, K.S. Voinov and of other painters. The theme of the North in the works of the modern artists is considered on the examples of paintings by A. Kirtsova, A. Ponomaryov, A. Suzdalev and others. Besides, in the given article we study the artworks of foreign artists. The works of R. Kent represent an example of appealing to the theme of the North in traditional pictorial art. Besides, we have singled out the works of such authors as D. Almond and G. Van de Verve among the modern foreign painters. And in the article, we appeal to such projects as «Arctic Polar Circle» and «Pan-Barentz», as examples of the modern artistic projects on the Northern theme.

Keywords: concept of «the north»; work of art; the theme of the north in fine arts; theme of the north in traditional pictorial art; the theme of the north in the works of modern art; documentary-ethnographic, philosophical and social approaches to visualization of the concept of «the North»; visual ethnography of the native small-numbered peoples of the North and the North of the Krasnoyarsk Region; D.I. Karatanov, A.P. Lekarenko, B.Y. Ryauzov, K.S. Voinov, A. Kirtsova, A. Ponomaryov, A. Suzdalev, D. Almond, G. Van de Verve, The Public Art Action GO PENGUINS, «Penguins» by Timur Novikov, video-installation «Snow Angel» by Leonid Tishkov, «Angel of the North» by Antony Gormley, The Exhibition «Pan-Barentz», «Arctic Polar Circle».

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**POINT. Theoretical aspects of the «North»
concept visualization
in the pieces of pictorial art.
Documentary-ethnographical,
philosophical and social approaches
to visualization of the concept
of «the North».**

In the modern science it is supposed that the key notions of the mankind about these or those cultural phenomena can be not only verbalized in words, but also visualized in pictorial art. Thereat, visual images of the concepts most often represent the deepest world outlook notions of man about cultural phenomena. In the given article we suggest to analyze the conceptual content of the phenomenon of «the North» by means of studying of artworks of traditional and modern art, wherein artists pay attention to the theme of the North.

First of all, we are to decide, what is meant under the notion of «the North» in the context of the given research. Topology of the North is the polar and the sub-polar belts.

The polar belt is the extreme North, which is practically free from the human penetration, and it very seldom becomes the fundamental for the works of pictorial art because of its inaccessibility. But, if the painter still addresses to the theme of the extreme North, then «human-less» areas, being always in the state of eternal sleep under the thick layers of ice and snow, very often become the symbol of authentic relations between the man and the nature. And the truth of these relations is in the following: the nature is completely indifferent to the human presence on this planet, and sometimes the symbol is spread out up to that, that microcosm is even presented as something antagonistic to the man in some works of art. The image of a cruel world and a man, who is defenseless before it, is very often formed by the works of cinematograph, starting from numerous narrative stories about

conquerors of the North, who are get frozen in snows, and finishing with philosophical parables about that how a man, staying in the Extreme North and being alone with the apathetic Nature, goes sometimes mad.

Sub-polar belt is already an areal of habitation of small-numbered peoples of the Extreme North, who often become personages of works of art. Landscapes of the sub-polar belt are already not the symbol of fatality of human existence in the world. These landscapes very often represent real prototypes of abstract pictures because of unique light effects of the North, as far as being concentrated, they consist of horizontal lines of various colors and tints. They can be a white bar of snow or, for example, a stripe of green creeping grass, the line of horizon, merging with the stripes of blue, dark blue, gold and grey colors, which can be the colors of the picturesque northern sky.

But most often, the habitants of the sub-polar climatic belt become the main subject of the artistic interest in this belt. They are: the Evenkis, the Saams, the Nganasans, the Eskimos, the Chukchi and so on. In pictorial art, there have been formed several approaches to depiction of life of these nations: documentary, philosophical and sort of social. Documentary approach presupposes drawings and pictorial or graphical descriptions of the unique ethnical atmosphere: traditional rituals, traditions of everyday life organization, rear utensils, clothes, and costumes with decorative-symbolic ornamentation and so on. Philosophical approach presupposes visual embodiment of a thinking process about the essence of the human existence on the basis of observations of people's life. In comparison with the civilized man, they are more close to the original way of life, to archetypical bases of human existence. In the row of art works, which depict the theme of human life in the North – for example, in the Barents region – there are

such works, which touch upon social aspects of people's life in those regions: how much does the life of native small-numbered peoples depend on industrial resources of the given territories? How much is preservation of ethnical originality of the northern peoples important in the context of globalization processes? Social context becomes more often the theme for the works of modern art.

In the given context, we shall consider such masterpieces, on which bases it is possible to make such resumptive conclusions. But, beforehand, we should also outline those reasons, which make the theme of the North so important for artistic creativity, and, to be more precise, for pictorial art. On the bases of painters' comments and analysis of cultural attractiveness of the Northern topology we can single out the following reasons of their interest in the given topic:

1) Firstly, the North is a space of phenomenology of life. Here, life exists in a form, which is most purified from everything superficial – from social etiquette, political preferences and so on. Human behavior in the North is most often reduced to its most fundamental instincts of survival. Under such conditions, the man undergoes a sort of test to the limit of his «humanistic» world outlook positions. It is not without reason that a lot of books, songs («Draw the guy to the mountains – take the risk» V. Vysotsky) and films «The way I've spent this summer» are created on the topic. Modern British painter Daren Almond have said the following about northern areas: «Arctic and Antarctic are the only places in the world, which have not been influenced by our civilization, where social and political relations do not yet exist, and that is why they can be considered to be the only places of «the State of the Nature». Thus, existence in the North lets us perceive such phenomena as «life», «nature» or even «macrocosm» and «man» in their most pure form.

2) econdly, the North is interesting for the artists because of its pictorial positions. Northern landscape is a finished pictorial piece: monotonous, dissolved by the eternal whiteness with an unlimited perspective, wherever you look. There are some peculiar picturesque plots: for example, the round-the-clock sun, which is much brighter because of its reflections on the snow. And what a remarkable feeling to see the northern lights – a natural education book of light depiction? And to the utmost real reflections of mountains in crystal pure waters? There is even nothing to do in order to bring the landscape to perfection – the nature has created the picture instead of the artist, who is left only to copy the presented.

The North suggests the artist to get experience of a qualitatively new, another space. Such a space suits both the painters-analytics, who strive to perceive the laws of the macrocosm by means of observation of the nature existence, being freed from all the human, and artists-romantics, for whom the severe North is the right place for human heroism, which is concluded in that, that to continue to be a man, even in the conditions when you are made to live on the level of your instincts.

The concept of «the North» includes materially given notions and characteristics: «snow», «whiteness», «cold», «ice», «without people», «vastness», and «inaccessibility». «The North» also supposes qualitative definitions: «solitude», «emptiness», «flight», «purity», and «stupor». Let us single out polar pairs of definitions of the word «north»: ephemerality-eternity (melting snow and eternal frost), solitude-rest, shine-night (northern lights and polar night), beginning-ending (cardinal direction – the end of the world).

«The North» is geographically one of the forth cardinal points, which corresponds to the direction of the sun in the midnight. In European

mapping tradition, the North is situated upwards in the maps, because it is defined by the only stationary object in relation to the Earth – the Polar star. We may suppose that it is a source of such a characteristic of the North as «hope, expectancy». The North is the top of the Earth, and «the top», «the upper world» is given the status of the «Other» in any mythological and philosophical system. As the top of the world axis, «the North» is characterized as «unachievable» and «mysterious». Moreover, the North Pole is a point, which belongs to any of the meridians. This way, «the North» is another existence, which is present in any point of the Earth. Physical laws of the North differ from the laws of the Earth – it also influences the attitude to «the North», as to another world, and forms «other» principles of existence. Notions, which form the concept of «the North», are fully purified from human existence and carry in itself only the power of thinking exploration (in connection with its physical low accessibility).

The theme of the north is interesting as for the painters of traditional pictorial school, so for the modern artists, who use new technologies – photography, video and so on instead of canvas and colors for creation of their works of art.

EXAMPLE.

Visualization of the concept of «the North» in masterpieces of traditional and modern art.

The theme of the north is especially interesting for the Russian painters. In particular, the whole book of researcher Skorobogacheva Y.A. «Art of the Russian North» is dedicated to the way, the given theme is presented in the works of art, predominantly, of the verge of XIX-XX centuries. In the book, the main attention is paid to the landscapes of the north presented in creative works of such painters as Kuindzhi A.I., Shishkin I.I., Grabar

I.E., Nesterov M.V., Levitan I.I., who travelled to the Russian North – to the Arkhangelsk province, to the Vyatka province, to the Solovetsky Archipelago, along the banks of the Northern Dvina and so on. Some painters – for example, Bilibin I.Y. – were interested in the North as in the source of original Russian decorative ornaments. We find landscapes and genre-pieces, describing views of extreme northern territories, in the oeuvre of some artists. From the point of view of the native small-numbered peoples' life presentation, the oeuvre of Borisov A.A. is of special interest. He lived among the Nenets for some time and depicted details of the Samoyeds' everyday life, their traditional dwellings, funeral rites, idols, sights of the Kara Sea and so on in his pictures. Besides, it is also valuable that A.A. Borisov wrote the book «At Samoyeds' place. From Pinegi up to the Kara Sea», where he described painter's attitude to the theme of the North; features and details, which could impress an artist in the North and reasons of his own interest for this theme: «The extreme North, with its gloomy, but powerful and mysterious nature, with its eternal ice and its long polar night, has always been attractive for me».

Most «northern» painters of traditional school have worked and are working in the Krasnoyarsk Region, as far as it practically adjacent to the Northern Arctic Ocean, and that is why most Krasnoyarsk painters have made creative trips to the northern latitudes – they are Dmitry I. Karatanov, and Andrei P. Lekarenko, Boris Y. Ryauzov, and Vladimir I. Meshkov, Konstantin S. Voinov and others. Trips of these painters to the North have been also connected with their wish to know more about the life of the Region, and that is why they have turned out to be in Evenkiya, Norilsk, and Dudinka on a certain stage of their life and creative activity, and have lived in tundra with the reindeer-breeders and native people.

On the verge of XIX-XX centuries, American and European anthropologies went to multi-years' expeditions to so-called primitive nations, who have been living in tribes up till now. In the result of those expeditions, archaic simplicity and clarity of principles of peoples' co-existence with nature and with other peoples have revealed to the scientists the essence of most of the phenomena in the life of the civilized man. The way of life of the northern peoples of the Krasnoyarsk region is also a source for understanding of most phenomena of the modern man's everyday life, the same as aborigines of the Trobriand Islands and South America for the founders of cultural anthropology. In the Krasnoyarsk region, not only scientists, but also painters pay special attention to the life of peoples in the area of the Yenisei bay.

In creative works of most Krasnoyarsk painters there is presented a whole collection of ethnographically-valuable visual images. In such art works, the concept of the North is understood as a place of human habitation of other culture, with its peculiar traditions and rituals of everyday life.

Thus, since 1901, Dmitry I. Karatanov was travelling to the North and joined ethnographical or region study expeditions. His trips were financed by fairy godfathers, whose collections were afterwards enriched by the painter's works. He created masterpieces on the themes of history of the northern people, painted genre-pieces, and moreover, he made a lot of drawings of traditional northern costumes, fixing their everyday life and utensils. Subsequently, these ethnographic documents became not only artistically, but also scientifically valuable. Now, they are kept in the Krasnoyarsk Museum of Local Lore, History and Economy and the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg.

In 1925 Andrei P. Lekarenko decided to make a journey at first to the South, and then

to the North of the Krasnoyarsk region. In the North, he made friends with the local people – the Nenets, the Nganasans, and the Evenkis. He got acquainted with the native way of living and was moving on reindeer and dogsleds for more than two years from one camp to another. From the reminiscences of Andrei P. Lekarenko about this period of his life: «having lived for more than two years among the people of this severe northern region, I have got nothing to do, but to admire their cordiality, kindness and readiness to share their last piece of food, to do somebody only a favour».

Boris Y. Ryauzov travelled along the Siberian rivers – Yenisei, Ob' and Irtysh. The farthest places for him were Dudinka and Norilsk. The central place in the oeuvre of Boris Y. Ryauzov is precisely taken by the landscapes – the genre, which is traditionally associated with northern areas. Pictorial works of Boris Y. Ryauzov can be compared with artistic searches of impressionists, for whom the main thing is to «tell» about interrelatedness of the earth and celestial existence. One can achieve it with the help of showing the way the colors of the sky penetrate into the colors of the earth and the water, and thereat everything is filled with air, which can be felt. In the artworks of Boris Y. Ryauzov one can meet similar philosophical-pictorial themes, but if C. Monet and C. Pissarro draw the red sun is reflecting in the channels of the Paris Siena River, the Krasnoyarsk painter do it on the Siberian material. Being fully covered with snow, the earth does not at all differ from the white cold sky, and it is hardly possible to distinguish seldom presence of a man or warm lights of home in this unlimited whiteness.

Vladimir I. Meshkov is a master of linoleum engravings. In the Soviet times he was sent to work in Evenkiya as a painter in the newspaper «Evenkiya's New Life». It happened in 1939, and at that time the Evenkis people did not almost

speak Russian, and that is why the main material for the newspaper was the graphics by Vladimir I. Meshkov, which was clear to all the people without words. He surely made predominantly everyday life pictures about the life of the Evenkis. His most well-known colored engravings are those, which personages are nature, deer – hosts of those places, hunters with dogs, and northern lights. Everything, we know about the North, is possibly known exactly because of such works. But, artworks of Vladimir I. Meshkov are first of all known because of their artistic values: bright monochromatic linoleum engravings, where there are a lot of variegated stains – northern lights or the huge northern sun with divergent circles of light, all the personages are subordinated to proper compositions. Surely, one should better see such masterpieces – moreover, exhibitions of this painter are organized rather often in Krasnoyarsk.

Pictures of the North by Konstantin S. Voinov are first of all a philosophical revelation about the man. And secondly, they show national details of the northern peoples' life – more often, ethnical portraits, authentic costumes and decorations, national and tribal holidays and rituals.

Artist's interest to the theme of the North was also stirred up by his trip to the lower course of the Yenisei River – a traditional source of inspiration for the local painters. Naturally, the unique light of the North, the brightest sun during a polar day and open empty spaces with a faraway line of horizon – all this natural beauty, which every specialist of colors and canvas strived to see. Moreover, Konstantin S. Voinov studied the details of the northern everyday life with the help of daguerreotypes of early research expeditions, which were kept in the Krasnoyarsk Museum of Local Lore, History and Economy, and using the cultural-historical materials about everyday life, traditions and customs of the native small-numbered peoples of the region. All

this resulted in a whole series of graphic works, wherein he presented original traditions of twelve nations, living on the territory of the Krasnoyarsk region – Evenkis tribal deer, Kets' tandoors and bread cooking, Chukchas' household, moving with reindeer and so on.

The North in the Konstantin S. Voinov's pictures is, first of all, the people, who populate this territory; there is no admiration of the northern landscapes, except presentation of extremely bright light effects and movement of clouds, which transfer all the thoughts into the macrocosmic scale. Images are easily read and understood by the spectators because of application of all the traditional laws of pictorial art and simple compositions.

Image of a man, living in a natural connection with the nature, is used by the artist for philosophical generalizations concerning some objective laws of existence. For example, in the masterpieces «Two Women» and «This is Life» he uses a similar principle of artistic image formation: the spectator is revealed the essence of changes, which occur to the man from his youth to his old age. In the picture «Two Women» there is practically presented one woman – in her youth and her old age at one and the same time: at first, it is a girl with a traditional embroidered band «girl's beauty» and two decorative ornamental lateral ribbons, and then, it is an old woman, who has got her wrinkles-experience, and who smiles charitably to the world. In the picture «This is Life», life is getting experience on the way from a boy, being unsophisticated in fishing, to an experienced old fisher with a tobacco pipe of wisdom, correspondingly, with a much bigger catch.

Besides, in the works of Konstantin S. Voinov there are certain religious-philosophical interpretations: thus, some scenes of the northern life can be compared with traditional canons of Biblical events representation. It can be especially

easily seen in the picture «Transpolar Madonna», where not only the title lets us draw a parallel with the religious history, but the very scene of nursing of a child by a woman in sakhe (or in dokhe) is sacralized, and it makes the mother as big as the spherical universal fullness. In the picture «White parka» one can find parallels with the scene «Annunciation Day»: sacral light falls on a woman, who is busy with a humble home work – darning of a traditional jacket (parka) with a hood.

On the whole, if one is very attentive, one can see a revelation of eternal plots of human existence in any everyday situation, and then there appears a question – why is philosophical essence of the life revealed precisely in the people of the North?

The answer can be found in the paintings «Confession to the Fire» and «Confession to the Water», which demonstrate a close connection of the northern man and the nature. «Confession to the Water» can be taken literary- it depicts an aborigine lying at the water and telling about his feelings to the nature, but when we see that the curves of his body are similar to the curves of the river, it lets us understand that natural powers are really embodied in the northern man. And piercing, gloomy and thoughtful look of a young man in a fiery halo makes us suppose that it is the fire itself being presented in its anthropomorphic form.

The masterpiece «Wonders» continues the topic of relations between the nature and the man: here, a small Evenki boy admires beauties of the nature – probably the spectator is presented a birth of a new artist, who will be always from now on full of desire to capture the sapphire, golden and scarlet lights of the sky and to place them on his abstract canvases, which are based on real events, though it may seem strange.

In general, Konstantin S. Voinov has created several dozens of pictorial and graphical

masterpieces, which depict northern people as nations, in whose life simplicity the spectator gets back his knowledge about his connection with the laws of natural existence.

Naturally, the theme of the North does not concern only Krasnoyarsk painters. Let us also recollect an American artist of XX century – Rockwell Kent. He is one of those artists, who did not strive to live his life in warmth and comfort. His studio was situated not on the last floors of prestigious sky-scrappers, but in the most northern American regions – in particular, in 1918-19 he worked in Alaska, later Kent went farther and farther to the North and reached Greenland. He was very famous in Russian, in particular, in the Soviet times and according to the illustrations to «Moby-Dick» by Herman Mellwill. In the pictures of Rockwell Kent, the North is perceived as some romantic space – the world of freedom from everything unessential and secondary, where all the human feelings are purified from everything superfluous – the world, where a romantic hero could run away to in order to obtain harmony with the fullness of macrocosm. If in the pictures of V.I. Meshkov and B.Y. Ryauzov the Krasnoyarsk tundra is an unlimited whiteness, which is endless, then the pictures of Kent depict the Northern Ocean, which is farther, full of icebergs and high snow mountains.

In XXI century, ethnographical (documentary) tasks of visual images creation are solved with the help of photo camera, and pictorial peculiarities of the North are already fully analyzed and carried to abstraction. Consequently, an era of new artistic tasks, materials and technologies for the research of the North is coming.

Thus, traditional pictorial painters and graphic artists have been interested in the North, as a place for romantic heroism, and have approached it from the ethnographical point of view, and also they have been solving pictorial

tasks, harmoniously combining unique northern lights and illumination. However, when the era of high technologies has come, photo camera starts helping to carry out ethnographical researches. In particular, in 2007 photographers Alexander Kuznetsov and Alexander Sorin implemented the photo-project «Countermotion» – they researched Northern and Southern points of the region by means of documentary photographing. Art started to work in new forms, genres and with the help of completely new technical capabilities. We may say that as for today, pictorial combinations of northern regions are fully studied, analyzed, phenomenolised and reduced to a complete abstraction.

Reduction of traditional northern landscapes and northern color palette to a pure abstraction has been performed by Moscow painter Alyona Kirtseva, at the exhibition with an unsophisticated title «the North», which has been recently opened in the halls of the Stella Art Foundation. At this exhibition there is presented a row of artworks, wherein the painter shows an evolution of the northern landscape from a quite realistic landscape of cloudy tundra to a completely abstract disintegration of colors: brown, green, dark-blue, white, grey, and blue with some touch of other tints.

Though, after all the pictorial possibilities of the northern latitudes have been exhausted, there have appeared new technologies in art, and artists have started to work in other genres, what has allowed to reconsider the northern theme in art. Surely, modern Russian painters – such as for example, Andrei Suzdalev and Alexander Ponomaryov still continue to create on the topic of the North.

The work «The Farthest» by Andrei Suzdalev introduces one more motif into the northern story, which has always been connected to the geographical assimilation of the new territories. The concept of the north is like «graphics»

(«crystal clarity of space, nothing excessive») and «mapping», «sensual assimilation of new territories». Andrei Suzdalev went to the islands of the White Sea, and in the result of that journey he presented a map of his untraditional trip: there, one could see not the geographical places and spatial coordinates, but his artistic experience and impressions in the course of his journey. He inscribed a monitor into a strict black-and-white geometry, and this monitor showed the stages of this journey step by step. In the work «The Northern Foot-Print of Leonardo», Alexander Ponomaryov made a curtsey to the great Italian master and brought his creation into the northern surroundings. The artist painted a submarine of the sea fleet, paying tribute to its great inventor Leonardo da Vinci, who, being a real humanist of Renaissance, would never have invented it, if he had known those inhumane purposes it would be used for. Thus, the fresco of the sea fleet submarine is a hope that it will at last remember its «father» and will first of all contribute to the cultural relations, but not to the military purposes.

Russian painters are not surely the only ones, who are interested in the theme of the North, but on their example we can comprehend in what types and kinds of genres Russian art deals with the theme of the north today. While on the West films and installations are very popular.

The concept of «the North» is represented as romantics, as a creation of impressive images for experiencing of the human existence in the works of Holland painter Guido Van de Verve. He has created several video films in the result of his trip to the Northern Pole – they are both extremely romantic and impressive. The first film has been made in the most central place of the Northern Pole – there, where the axis of the earth's sphere is, and around which the earth goes round. The film is titled «The day, when I did not spin together with the earth»: the essence of it is that the artist has stayed at that place in the course of the whole

day (precisely 24 hours on the severe north!) and has been gradually spinning counterclockwise, i.e. against the earth's spinning. So now, he is probably the only man on the earth, who has made practically impossible and has lived in spite of the laws of physics a whole day long. The other film of his is «Everything will be well!» – such an optimistic title has been given by the artist to his video, where in the course of 15 minutes he is riding right before the drifting ice.

The example of installation on the theme of the North is presented in the oeuvre of Daren Almond. Daren Almond is a world-famous English artist – he has visited two extreme points of the globe – Antarctic and Arctic, the points of maximum north and maximum south, explaining it by that, that those places are the last pieces of purity, which are free from political and social determinants. His works are first of all photos of primeval spaces, but he has also created an installation, which he exhibits all around the world – metallic electronic watch of the size of a container for floating cargos delivery, the watch, which independently of the place it is exhibited, shows Greenwich time. The given work is titled «In the mean time» and can be interpreted as that that being far from human presence, the north is a sort of reference point in everything human. On one hand, Greenwich is some abstract value, emptiness, which at the same time is a symbolic fixation of coordinates of the eternity on the world map in relation to the rest of the living world. This way, in his works there is formed a concept of «the North, in the face of which everybody is equal».

«The North» includes vividly expressed opposite qualities, and this antinomy has been always hypnotizing for the artists. Practical analysis of the masterpieces, modeling the concept of «the North» also includes such works as: the Public Art Action “Go Penguins” (Liverpool, 2010)¹, the Object «Penguins» by Timur Novikov

(St. Petersburg, 1989)², the video-installation «Snow Angel» by Leonid Tishkov (Moscow, 1998)³, and the sculpture «Angel of the North» by Antony Gormley (Great Britain, 1998)⁴.

The project “Go Penguins” was a winter public art action, which was organized according to the order of the Liverpool City Council in 2010, and was appealed «to support the Year of Environment and to energize the New Year's time» in the Northern-England industrial city. Painters, schoolchildren and creative groups created about a hundred of penguins made of fiberglass, about one and a half meter in height. The lines of sculptures installation were spreading out from the Liverpool city center to its peripheries. Each penguin had its own unique appearance and name, which had been given to him by its author and «patron». These were the titles, which were connected to the environment: FLORA, ANTARCTIC WARMING, GO GREEN, A DRY NEW WORLD, GLOBAL WARNING. These were funny names: SUPENGUIN, YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD HERO!, CUT AND PASTE, GROW YOUR OWN PENGUIN. Proper names and nick names: JOHNNY VEGAS PENGUIN, PENGUINELENA, ENERGY BOB. Metaphoric names: TICKET TO RIDE, THE ANGEL OF THE NORTH POLE, WILDFLOWER PENGUIN. Penguin became a pure form, a pattern, which could accept any image: from Cheshire cat up to Electricity. The birds were given «mysterious» names with practically totemic functions: the embodiment of an environment defender, of a friend, of the nature, or of a mythical personage.

Colonies of penguins became «magical helpers» of people, who united their artistic powers in order to «defeat the winter». In the city, these bright objects with an individual appearance and their own names became recognizable, became the companions of the citizens, and marked the grey-white winter with colorful splashes. City

sculptural objects, in the given case – penguins, always have had the meaning of a defending and coordinating pillar, which organizes a chaotic surrounding around itself. As a northern unordinary bird, penguin is endured with the features of an angel-defender, a visitor from another world with good intentions. Penguin is a messenger of the northern «otherness»; it has transformed an ordinary city landscape: maps it in a new way, having created a geographically-mental connection with the Northern Pole along the river channels.

The objects «Penguins» were created in 1989 by Timur Novikov, the founder of the project of «neo-academism» and minimalism, and a messenger of everything «new» in Petersburg art of the last two decades of XX century. «Timur constantly felt the border of otherness»⁵, which is materially present in most of his works (consisting of two contrast parts of the space). In the series of «Horizons» (1987-1989), which includes the work «Penguins», the painter has introduced cheap manufactured fabrics into the list of artistic techniques: two pieces of different color and texture, which he has sewed together, using semantically the connecting joint as a line of horizon. The images, structuring fabrics as spaces (figures of animals or techniques as archetypical symbols of terrestrial, water and air spaces), are placed in accordance with this line.

The object represents a canvas, being connected along two parts of the fabric of black and white colors. «Horizon», in the given case it is vertical: the black wedge steps a little over the white one in the upper part, while the white half is bigger in the lower part. Images of small penguins are placed in the upper part of the white space, and they are going to the black verge. At the bottom of the black half of the work the following inscriptions are whitened: «PENGUINS», «TIMUR», and «1989». Animalistic images endue the border line between black and white

with the plot of «the North»: penguins, boundless snow and endless night; Penguins at the end of the Earth.

On the white part, one can see folds of the fabric, and because of them this space seems to be dimensional, while the black part seems to be lower. The white (spectrum of all the colors) is perceived as everything, and the black (absence of colors) – as nothing by operation of the law of the human perception. In the plot of «the north» the white is perceived as the foundation, the land, the ice, and the black is as night and emptiness. Thus, we can apply characteristics of volume, space and time in relation to the light, which has become material, fleshy by «nothing» of the night. Black emptiness absorbs in itself the finite, dissolving in itself. Northern topography lets us present antimony of existence in maximum abstraction. «The North» is a combination of contrasts, practical model of «otherness», with which help one can reveal universal laws of life organization. «My work represents an open text, as far as the space never organizes itself completely on semantic level. ... I would like to denote the space in a free way, but not to present it in detail. ... the picture on the fabric seems to be always present, but at the same time it is as if absent»⁶.

Images of tiny penguins contrast with a huge space, which is free from them, and suggest the spectator to perceive the work from the position of aerophotography: to put oneself on the demiurge's place, on the place of the creator, observing the Earth. The spectator is objective because of his direct un-relatedness with the space, his remoteness from it; understanding of the world processes, which are beyond the zone of humane influence, becomes available to him. The artist works with the psychology of perception, according to which the individual could percept only something very small or something very large. The person can realize the large with the

help of the small: thus, small images of birds make the space around them immense.

Apparently, the penguins have been placed into the space of «snow» made from the same fabric, as the black part of the space: these are materialized traces of the «night», which are coming back. In the Neo-Platonist theory of emanations and immanations, Absolute spirit gets its fullness and perfection, materializing from Nothing into Something, which returns back into Nothing. In his oeuvre, Novikov develops the theme of the ideal and the question of the masterpiece function. «Ideality of «Horizons» proceeds from both soft friendliness of the artist, who sees the Earth from some light silky-staple skies, and absolute harmony of the concept and its realization, from elaborated asymmetry, creating the effect of the living picture»⁷. The categories of Nothing and Something get material fabric of the image: the concept of «the North» clearly visualizes the ideas of materialization and disfiguring of the Absolute.

The video-installation «Snow Angel» by Leonid Tishkov (2007) consists of the over-bed video-projection of a lying doll, covered by the blanket and with will-lessly dropped cloths of wings. The lamp under the bed shines weakly through the white wings, and there are large slippers near by. There are two sources of light in the installation box: dark-blue light goes from the screen and yellow – from the lamp. In the video we observe the way the man in felt boots and a hat with earflaps, and with wings on his winter quilted jacket, makes his way through high snow banks, sinking in the snow of the Ural Mountains and Himalayas. Backing the spectator, «Snow Angel» leads him and the camera after himself. But, the bed with a sleeping or a sick man does not let us follow him – he is an apparent author of the Angel, who can be his dream or his reminiscence-thought. As far as the author of the angel is the painter himself, then the work becomes a self-

portrait, and it reveals the idea of intermediate of creative work. The figure of the angel is the archetype of a divine intermediate; consequently, creative activity is a priory divine. The man on the bed is materialized: the painter is an earth «angel in flesh». His «instruments» are: wings and light (in the given case it is the lamp). Video-angel leads to the heavenly world, full of hardships and difficulties – in the form of snow, the same as the painter infatuates the spectator into a complicated speculative world of the masterpiece. Here, one can reveal such notions, being connected to «the North», as «inaccessibility» (of the heavenly world), «loneliness» (the way of everyone), «cold» (detachment from sensuousness), «whiteness» (purity of idea), and «endless way». «Snow Angel» looks like a penguin: his wings denote sooner a symbolic flight, and his main target is to trudge through obstacles and to lead to an unknown aim. Anthropomorphy of the intermediate is presented according to the traditions of angels to assume human similitude, materializing from the heavenly world: and the desolate «North» can be as well the place of his habitation, consisting of an ephemeral and eternal material.

The sculpture «Angel of the North» of British sculptor Antony Gormley was erected in Gateshead (Great Britain) in 1998. It represents a steel sculpture of an angel of 20 meters height, with the wingspread of 54 meters and is considered to be the largest angel statue in the world. «Angel» stands on the hill, overlooking two arterial roads. The wings of the statue are bent at the angle 3.5 degrees forwards; and according to the sculptor's words, it creates the feeling of embrace. «The ANGEL resists our post-industrial amnesia and bears witness to the hundreds and thousands of colliery workers who have spent the last three hundred years mining coal beneath the surface. The scale of the sculpture has been essentially given its site in a valley that is a mile and a half a mile wide, and with the audience that is

travelling past on the motorway at an average of 60 miles an hour»⁸. The large singular sculpture in the open space runs back to the tradition of building monuments in honor of heroic persons, existing in the history («Minin and Pozharsky» by I. Martos, V. Yekimov, 1818), mythology («David» by Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1501-1504) or monuments expressing some allegoric meaning («Freedom, illuminating the world» by F. O. Bartholdi, 1886), and serves as a cultural orienteer for the maximum number of people.

The height of «Angel» is approximately 10 times higher than the human height, what corresponds to the proportions of Doric columns of the Parthenon. Proportions of «the golden section» inspire the heroic spirit of the man: the same way as the Parthenon, «Angel» does not suppress the man by its size and «grows higher» in the course of coming nearer to it. The statue is a ribbed anthropomorphic cocoon with a huge wingspread, and its solution is rather geometrical. The stiffening ribs support the body of the sculpture, at the same time underlining its silhouette, and symbolically reminding antique statues' cyclas. In particular, Victory of Samothrace is a vivid example of a winged anthropomorphic deity (II century B.S.), though, «Angel» does not demonstrate a flight or an impulse, but sooner a function of defense and covering. His outspread wings refer the spectator to the iconography of Orant-Virgin, whose presentment with outspread arms has an intercessory power, while its statics and symmetry make it magnificent and monumental. The sculpture is deprived of male or female attributes. The stiffening ribs dissolve the powerful stout body of «Angel» by the contrast play of light and shadow. «Angel» is seen from most places on the hill as if being above the clouds; the sun is rising behind its back, its head props the stars, and its figure is crossed over by the rainbow – it belongs to the sky, but steadily

stands on the Earth. It is the Messenger of the North – a powerful superman, who is ready to cover everybody under its wings. Being seen from afar, it is a symbol of a guarded land and people. The former mining town in the north of England can be considered to be the end of the earth, while erection of «Angel of the North» seems to be a new starting point of the system of coordinates (vertical-horizontal stiffening ribs and «the cross» of the winged figure). «Angel» infuses some new sense and value into the northern land, gives a new hope and recumbence, manifesting by itself «the Good News» about a possibility of spirit's flight in this life. The sculptor describes his creation as «an attempt to materialize the other side of the life, where we all present »⁹, in other words, to materialize the other being. Within the frames of the concept of «the North», «Angel» represents «eternity», «defense», «presence of infinity», «axis», «spirit exaltation», and «hope».

Attention to the theme of the North is never ceasing. Northern expeditions are always topical. Abroad, they have even created a special annual project «The Arctic Circle», within which frames the organizers rent a special ship with an experienced captain, which is supplied with all the necessary painting materials and attributes. Painters undergo a competitive selection, then they start on an expedition to the Polar region, and at the end of it they sell their arctic drawings in the galleries all around the world and organize exhibitions.

Social-economical realization of the northern theme is illustrated by the artistic project «Pan-Barentz», 2009. Seventeen Norwegian and Russian painters all together analyze and fantasize on the theme of the northern region. In the project «Pan-Barentz», the artists have been suggested to imagine the future and to contemplate the present of the Barentz Region – of the joint Russian and Norwegian North. These

vast territories are, on one hand, profitable to use for industrial development, and, on the other hand, there is a necessity to improve the level of living of the local population. Most Russian and Norwegian painters have taken an active part in this project. Swain Fligary Johanson has invented an interactive snowman, which readily responds to the world level of oil prices: it is melting, when the price is dropping and is growing, when the price is going up. Yor Nango has begun to solve the problems of the native people, having suggested Lappish women to knit sweaters with a pattern of traditional types of tents, and afterwards to sell these sweaters as souvenirs right in the gallery. And the famous Russian creative group «Blue Noses» has shot a silent film about the story of relations between two northern populated localities of the region – Norwegian Kirkenes city and Russian Nikel village. Artists have demonstrated that visual art is a way of salvation of the northern regions' problems, and creative activity is always a means of improvement of the region's life.

Conclusion.

Thus, proceeding from the analysis of the key visual images, being connected to the northern theme, we may assert that in the mental scale the North is a constant reminder of a man, that he is just a particle of being in the Universe (thereat, rather insignificant particle), the nature domineers and enslaves him. The North is the only place in the modern world, which has not been influenced by civilization, social and political changes, that is why the North is such a place, where the man is first of all a man; and life runs as it is; it is a space being purified from everything secondary. The North is its people, whose traditions are unique, they are to be studied, to be developed and supported, because it is one of those rare unique phenomena of the modern world. In pictorial art, Northern regions are less interesting from the traditional industrial-practical point of view, the painters make people consider the North philosophically and comprehend its significance, and this way they improve the living conditions of the northern region.

- ¹ <http://www.gopenguins.co.uk/site/>
- ² <http://art4.ru/popup.php?aId=134&picId=900>
- ³ <http://leoniditishkov.blogspot.com/2009/03/blog-post.html>
- ⁴ <http://www.antonygormley.com/#sculptures/projects/all?stripDetail=056f2150-3338-4e26-ab86-7bdacf18340e&slide=0>
- ⁵ A. Khlobystin. A Blind Artist. Strategy and Tactics of Timur Novikov // A. Khlobystin / <http://azbuka.gif.ru/critics/slepoy-hudozhnik/>
- ⁶ Timur Novikov from the talk with A. Dragomoshienko, recorded 10.03.1990 // Y.Yu. Andreeva. Postmodernism. – St. Petersburg: Azbuka-Classika, 2007. – P. 281.
- ⁷ Y.Yu. Andreeva. Postmodernism. – St. Petersburg: Azbuka-Classika. 2007. – P. 285.
- ⁸ Antony Gormley // <http://www.antonygormley.com/#sculptures/projects/all?stripDetail=056f2150-3338-4e26-ab86-7bdacf18340e&slide=0>
- ⁹ Antony Gormley // <http://www.antonygormley.com>

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Визуализация концепта «север» в изобразительном искусстве

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В статье рассмотрена интерпретация темы «север» в классических и современных произведениях изобразительного искусства. Теоретическая часть работы представляет собой попытку обобщения существующих принципов и подходов к изображению северных территорий в изобразительном искусстве. Тема севера в изобразительном искусстве, с одной стороны, раскрывается как уникальная территория, отстраненная от глобализационных мировых процессов и, в целом, от присутствия человеческого и, в результате этого, позволяющая постигать законы мироздания и природы в первозданной чистоте. С другой стороны, север – это ареал проживания коренных малочисленных народов, поэтому такие народы, как нганасаны, ненцы, эвенки, эскимосы, долганы и т.д., становятся персонажами произведений искусства, раскрывающих тему севера. В статье выделено несколько подходов к визуальной интерпретации бытия северных народов: документально-этнографический, философский и обращение к теме северных народов в контексте социальной проблематики. Прикладная часть статьи посвящена анализу произведений живописи, видеоарта, инсталляций и художественных проектов в области визуального изображения севера. Часть искусствоведческого исследования посвящена произведениям графики и живописи художников Красноярского края, которые совершали экспедиции на север и запечатлели жизнь северных народов края, – это работы Д.И. Каратанова, А.П. Лекаренко, Б.Я. Рязова, К.С. Войнова и других художников. Тема севера в произведениях современных художников рассмотрена на примерах работ А. Кирцовой, А. Пономарева, А. Суздалева и др. В статье также изучены произведения зарубежных художников. Произведения Р. Кента представляют собой пример обращения к теме севера в классическом изобразительном искусстве. Среди современных зарубежных художников выделены работы таких авторов, как Д. Алмонд и Г. Ван де Верве. В качестве примеров современных художественных проектов с северной тематикой статья обращается к таким, как «Арктический круг» и «Пан-Баренц».

Ключевые слова: концепт «север»; произведение искусства; тема севера в изобразительном искусстве; тема севера в классической живописи; тема севера в произведениях современного искусства; документально-этнографический, философский и социальный подходы к

визуализации концепта «север»; визуальная этнография коренных малочисленных народов севера и севера Красноярского Края; Д.И. Каратанов, А.П. Лекаренко, Б.Я. Ряузов, К.С. Войнов, А. Кирцова, А. Пономарев, А. Суздалев, Д. Алмонд, Г. Ван де Верве, паблик арт акция go penguins, «пингвины» тимур новиковов, видеоинсталляция Леонида Тишкова «Снежный ангел», «Ангел севера» Энтони Гормли, «Пан-Баренц», «Арктический круг».
